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FINAL REPORT

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I

As one of the small group of naturalized Canadians who spent their formative years in what is now the Republic of South Africa I am often struck by the affinities and differences between my present and former domiciles, and am persuaded that if what follows is to have any value at all it had better centre itself around the analogy between Canada and South Africa. Such an approach should afford some opportunity for precision, and possibly even for cautious optimism—something of which, so long as we confine our attention within our national borders, we may too readily despair. I appreciate that the parallel with South Africa may be a misleading one, forced on the attention of a few observers only by virtue of their having known both countries at first hand. Every man is prone to exaggerate the validity of his own experience, having no other to set store by. On the other hand it is just as possible that the parallel is instructive, or can be made so. Since I incline to this alternative my discussion of the situation in South Africa will be fuller than most readers may expect or have much relish for, but it seems necessary too.

WHITE SOUTH AFRICA

Most informed comment on the Republic in our newspapers and magazines is nowadays concerned with the clash, or at any rate tension, between white South Africans and black. There is of course every warrant for this emphasis but the effect of it is to obscure the many differences existing

within the white camp and the black, each of which it tends to reduce to a bloc of uniform accord. As regards black South Africans, divided by all kinds of tribal and linguistic differences, and united only by a common grievance, this is an absurd oversimplification; and as regards white South Africans it is almost equally misleading. Their camp is split into approximate halves by a language difference, deriving from their descent from predominantly Dutch or English settlers, and split again on a slightly shifted line by differences of politics, the second split exacerbated but not exclusively determined by the first. In addition, as in Canada, there are differences of religion that correspond roughly to those of language, and social differences which are all the more important for being inconspicuous.

In presenting a survey of the white camp, the minority who for the present rule the country, it would thus be easy enough to multiply distinction after distinction within it; but though this might be scrupulous it would also be confusing. For our purposes I think it will be enough to lump all white South Africans into the two broad groups traditionally described as British and Boer. If many overlappings occur between them, due to political, religious, and social loyalties, these are minor and may reasonably be ignored.

The British section, consisting of whites whose home language is English whether or not their forefathers happened to come from Great Britain, makes up a much smaller segment of population than its Canadian equivalent: something like a tenth of the total, white and black, as against a rough two thirds. Geographically these people are concentrated in Natal and the Cape Province, by area respectively the smallest and largest of the Republic's provinces, and in such urban centres of the north

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as Johannesburg and Germiston. They are mostly Anglicans or moderate dissenters, with a fair sprinkling of Roman Catholics and Jews; and their political affiliations are broadly with the United Party, a party of moderation now out of office and rapidly declining into paralysis.

The Boers are the Afrikaans-speaking whites of Dutch, French-Huguenot, German, and (as odd surnames like "Murray" show) occasionally even Scottish descent. They are slightly more numerous than the British, and probably more cohesive as a group. Boer means "farmer" and originally this was accurate enough: though a few towns like Bloemfontein and Pretoria have always been Afrikaans the majority of the Boers were dispersed throughout the agricultural hinterland, especially in the Orange Free State and Transvaal. In recent decades, however, more of them have been shifting to cities and towns, even in the hitherto English-speaking stronghold of Natal. Their religious adherence is normally to one or other of the two Afrikaans Calvinist Churches, and as probably all the world now knows their main political loyalty is to the Nationalist Party, with its policy of racial apartheid or separation between the black majority and the whites. In South Africa electoral districts are weighted in favour of the rural vote, just as they are in some Canadian provinces, and this may help to explain why, with the Boer and British groups so evenly balanced, the Nationalist Party should today so effectively dominate the Parliament. Another explanation, and a more sobering one, is that even political moderates have latterly come to look more and more kindly on the Nationalist policy of apartheid. The British in Natal, for example, are morbidly apprehensive about the prosperity of the Indian community centered on Durban and, since the laws of apartheid discriminate just as severely against Indians as against Negroes, have often been seduced into voting for the Nationalists

as Rosenberg and Bernstein. They are mostly engineers or scientists
discontented with a lack of opportunity for advancement and have
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even when in all other respects their quarrels with Boer ideology have been bitter.

WHITE VERSUS WHITE

This bitterness may be carefully hidden but it is always there, smouldering under the surface. Elaborate pretences of harmony are much commoner in the Republic than they are in Canada, especially in the mouths of politicians, but only the very credulous can be taken in by them. The brute fact is that each group of whites is basically just as suspicious of the other as it is of the much larger group of blacks, and in some ways even more suspicious. The blacks after all are disfranchised and politically powerless so that, short of outright revolt, little real opposition can be expected from them. And to most white South Africans the prospect of a black revolt is very like the prospect of nuclear war—terrifying, and yet perhaps on balance pretty remote. On the other hand each white group has long suspected that, properly mobilized, the other could easily abridge its ambitions and interests; and this suspicion has been confirmed by the dramatic insurgency of the Boer group over the past two decades.

Since the Nationalist Party came to power, and more particularly since 1961, when the Republic was officially established, severing all formal ties with the rest of the British Commonwealth, the British whites have had to knuckle under to the wishes of the Boers, and this has understandably bred in them a feeling of resentment. But resentful feelings of one kind and another were always there between the two white groups, coupled with mistrust, and all that Republican status has really done has been to shift their incidence a bit from Boer to British. Back in the twenties and thirties it was the Boers who felt themselves to be patronized and slighted—so much so that occasionally if you tried to buy a railway

ticket from an Afrikaans clerk he would refuse to serve you if you spoke English. Today it is more often the British who feel like this: sipping gin and tonic on their Natal or Johannesburg lawns in the cool of the evening they grind their teeth at what "these bloody Dutchmen" are doing to their country. But this does not mean that the grievances of one group have simply been transferred to the other, like shifting weights on a seesaw. On the contrary, though resentment may manifest itself more readily in the underdogs of the moment beneath the surface it is evenly enough divided, and has been for generations. It is often said that white South Africans are living on a volcano, like Sicilian peasants tilling Mount Etna's slopes. In fact they are, but for many of them the distant threat of eruption is much less irksome, even today, than the present threat of affront or encroachment by their fellow peasants around on the other side. This may sound like madness, though I shall try to show that there is a kind of method in it. If the Boer peasants are mainly concerned to watch the British peasants, and vice versa, that is not because the volcano has been forgotten: if anything, both groups are all too aware that it is there. But the first point to be noticed about both factions, Boer and British, is this cardinal one of mistrust. Suspicion and resentment, with all their variations, are as much a part of the country's ethos as rugby football, the one tribal ritual which every South African, white and black, male and female, adult and child, is expected to venerate.

THE ROOTS OF RESENTMENT

Where do these mutual suspicions come from? To account for one group's mistrust will be to cover both, since sentiments of hostility always end by being reciprocated, and I shall accordingly concentrate on the less familiar side, that of the Boers.

In the first place it is a matter of historical record that there has been war between Boers and British, and much more recently than the equivalent conflict between French and English on the Plains of Abraham. The Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 brought defeat to the Boers, and their humiliation was all the more bitter when they looked back on what had gone before. More than sixty years earlier the British administration at the Cape, influenced by British missionaries well-disposed toward the Negroes, had laid down certain regulations for the freeing of slaves, and these regulations had so infuriated Boer slave-owners that many of them had pulled up their roots and set out on a Great Trek into the interior. The Trekkers of 1836 had fought and died to establish independent Boer republics in the north. Their grandsons of 1902, opposed by a mighty empire greedy for gold and diamonds, fought just as bravely to preserve that freedom, but in vain. Naturally enough they did not love their conquerors, however warmly British spokesmen like Rudyard Kipling might commend Boer marksmanship and valour. The British made the best of a very bad job with a peace settlement that was generous enough to win over many of the combatant Boers, among them the generals Botha and Smuts; but the noncombatant's sense of honour is always more touchy than the soldier's, and among the noncombatant Boers—Dr. D. F. Malan, later to be a Nationalist Prime Minister, was one of them—a strong hostility persisted. It has been fostered ever since by the Dutch Reformed Church and by Nationalist politicians, two very influential sections of the Boer intelligentsia with little to gain from a rapprochement and much to gain from its opposite. A country's currency is seldom an index of its politics, but when the Nationalist government issued new pound notes during the fifties this hostility was naively reflected in the design of them, which showed a scrawny and villainous-

looking lion—the British emblem reduced to something closer to a jackal or hyaena—trying to break a bundle of faggots, captioned by the country's motto, Ex Unitate Vires. A political cartoonist could hardly have made the point more blatantly, and it was no surprise that soon afterwards South Africa repudiated the British system of pounds, shillings, and pence and instituted a currency based on a new South African unit called the rand. This was a metric system but Boer laymen advocated it more strongly on nationalist grounds than on grounds of convenience. Clearly the wounds of 1836 and 1902 have not been allowed to heal.

A second cause for mistrust arises from the Boers' deep-rooted sense of cultural isolation, an isolation that is all the more vulnerable because their ties with the Netherlands have been voluntarily weakened over the years since the British annexation of the Cape in 1801. Outsiders sometimes think that the "Dutchmen" of South Africa must be much like those who until recently ruled Batavia, but this is not at all the Boers' way of regarding themselves. They are an independent nation, not an outpost of loyal Dutch colonists, and their cultural exchanges with Holland are nowadays pretty well confined to students returning to the Hague or Amsterdam to study Calvinist theology. Afrikaans has evolved so far from Dutch that to a Hollander it is either unintelligible or comically illiterate: "I is a Zouth African" is roughly, to his ears, the way a Boer identifies himself. The result is that a modern Boer can take little national pride in the cultural heritage of the Netherlands. Rembrandt and Vondel are almost as foreign to him as Leonardo and Shakespeare, and if he is to plume himself on his culture his self-esteem must be nourished on the very thin gruel provided by artists and writers within the Republic's borders. What makes this so hard for him to do with any assurance is the constant

threat of popular English culture, which in the form of books and films and magazines comes pouring into his country from Great Britain and the United States of America. He is like a man wading through the overflow waters in a canyon below an enormous dam, cradling a holy candle and looking anxiously back to see if the dam is going to burst, dousing the flame for ever. Naturally so habitual a sense of jeopardy leads him to exaggerate the merits of the culture he has, as though his candle were the ultimate source of light itself. It also encourages him to believe, sometimes with the singlemindedness of paranoia, that English-speaking culture is primarily devoted to annihilating his own, much as if authors in Cleveland and Bristol had thought only of their reception in Potchefstroom or Stellenbosch as they wrote.

A third reason for mistrust lies in the Boer's sense of economic and social inferiority to his English-speaking compatriots, an inferiority which has dwindled but which used to be painfully real. Thirty or forty years ago most of South Africa's wealth was controlled by the British camp, and the majority of the country's professional men were British too. "Have" was an English verb, "have not" an Afrikaans one. Among those who formed the upper levels of polite society the supercilious English racism which claims that "the niggers begin at Calais" was fairly common, and many well-established families still spoke of Britain as "home" and treated the Boers with almost the same patronage as they showed to the blacks. A very few Boer families responded in the way expected of them, by becoming anglicized, but their defection, bartering their birthright for a mess of social pottage, only sharpened the resentment of those who did not. A heavy responsibility for the current chauvinism of the Boers rests with these snobbish colonials of yesteryear, who barred Afrikaans-speaking colleagues from their bridge fours, blackballed them from their bowling clubs, and

repeatedly snubbed them at dances and teas. Such cat-scratches might not be fatal but they smarted, and are smarting yet. One of the chief monuments to Anglo-Saxon arrogance in the Republic is the system of private schools, institutions modelled on the British public schools in which boys and girls could even avoid the general requirement to learn Afrikaans, by taking French instead. Three such schools dominate the low hills around the city of Grahamstown, an educational centre in the eastern Cape Province—St. Andrew's College, Kingswood College, and the Diocesan School for Girls—and it is no accident that soon after the Nationalists consolidated their power a new Afrikaans school was established on another of the hills at a lavish cost. Enterprises of this kind are not just the salving of old scratches; they are also attempts to scratch back at the cat.

DEEPER AND BLACKER ROOTS

All these reasons for tension between Boers and British—the historical, the cultural, and the socio-economic—might be paralleled in other bicultural societies, but there is another reason which seems peculiar to South Africa alone and which is even more to blame for the situation there. It concerns the black population, that huge substratum upon which the edifice of white civilization has been precariously balanced.

To suggest that all English-speaking South Africans are perfect liberals, apostles of sweetness and light in all their dealings with the blacks, would be sheer nonsense—as nonsensical as to suggest that all Afrikaans-speaking whites are tyrannical oppressors. As a matter of fact on the private and personal level the British group has much to learn from the Boers, especially from those whose way of life has kept them in close touch with the mentality and customs of this dispossessed majority. Black

society in the Republic is still very largely a peasant society, the prospect before it still chiefly one of serfdom, and this has discouraged any very close understanding between the Negroes and the more affluent whites. Only prejudice would ascribe serfdom to the Boers, but their relative poverty and preference for outdoor work has preserved a much closer human contact between them and the blacks. Next to professional groups like anthropologists and social workers the white South Africans who know the Negroes best are the farmers and farmers' wives; and most of these have been Boers. By contrast, the average British white's comprehension of the blacks, as human individuals, is often shallow. He has not worked with them, conversed with them, or relaxed with them, and in consequence he has no real sympathy with their point of view.

Private or domestic attitudes, however, are ill reflected in the public and political tendencies of the two white groups. The British, taking their cue from the comparatively liberal tone of overseas British politics, have usually tended to feel that a few concessions might be made to the blacks, if only to keep them from growing too restless. The Boers on the other hand, with no tradition of liberalism behind them, and a lively sense of what would happen if black emancipation progressed too far, have always preferred a policy of baasskap, or bossmanship, with the Negroes kept under very close political control.

Just why this paradoxical Janus-facing should have come about, with each white group's political bent in part contradicting the private attitudes of its individual members, requires some explanation. The British posture, which might be described as liberal detachment, is not perhaps so very unfamiliar: any charity-worker could point out that a vague humanitarianism often goes with a distaste for personal involvement with

the poor. But the peculiar Boer blend of personal warmth and political sternness is much less usual, and may be puzzling. What things should we bear in mind in order to understand it?

We need to remember, first, the cruel battles, such as that at Blood River, which the Voortrekkers fought against Dingaan's Zulu impi more than a century ago. These lie far in the past but they were so shocking, and involved such cruel betrayals, that one can understand why even today the Trekkers' descendants should fear the rise of a strong black faction. It is true that English-speaking South Africans also fought with the blacks during the nineteenth century, but the shock of their battles seems to have been much less traumatic. I still have a cornflakes packet which I bought in South Africa during a visit there in 1958, with cut-out pictures of Voortrekkers, oxen, and native kraals printed on it. The legend given under the picture of the Trekker, in both official languages, neatly epitomizes the different views of the blacks taken by the two white camps. In English it says that he is "ready to fight for his ideals", a statement which even a Crow Jim would find inoffensive, but in Afrikaans it says that he is "ready to take aim against wild animals, vermin, and aborigines", a verbal progression no black man is likely to condone.

History then, even remoter history, has a lot to do with the way the Boers would prefer to govern the Negroes; but economics are important too. Black people in the Republic outnumber white people in a ratio of three or four to one, providing a continuing threat to the white wage-earner, and it goes without saying that this threat is particularly discomforting to the poorer whites. To give greater educational and political freedom to the blacks would open the way to economic freedom, flooding the labour market with many more employable workers than the country's economy could readily absorb. The Boers see all too clearly where such a situation would lead.

Black labour would soon displace white, if only because it would be cheaper, and only those whites in highly skilled or highly trained jobs and professions would be able to hold their own against the rising tide. This outcome even the comparatively affluent British fear. To the Boers, still largely an agricultural people, and economically depressed, it represents a nightmarish prospect of overthrow and effacement.

By themselves these fears would be serious enough, but there is a further fear, one which has something of a sexual basis in that it concerns the racial absorption of the whites by the blacks. Here I am aware that we touch on matters about which no one in his senses would care to dogmatize, but touch on them we must if the full situation is to be appraised with any insight.

A ROOTED FEAR

In the early years at the Cape the Dutch East India Company made no effort to discourage intermarriage between its white officials and the black women already in the Colony. Because of the shortage of European brides such marriages were even encouraged, with the result that some of South Africa's earliest heroes, like Simon van der Stel, were actually coloured men. Even today residual Negroid characteristics—very dark complexions, flattened noses, or tightly curled hair—can often be detected among the Boers, and when some years ago the Nationalist Government required all residents in the Republic to be registered as white or black there were some agonizing cases in which full brothers had to be classified on different sides of the colour bar.

Race is an almost unbelievably touchy subject in the country, and the very idea of this strain of Negro blood in the white population is something

that drives them to the verge of hysteria, especially in the case of the Boers. In general it is a matter which they simply refuse to acknowledge, let alone discuss; and yet, as with most such suppressions, the refusal produces a temper and behaviour which are thoroughly insecure, ready to take fire from the slightest spark. A swarthy Boer, asked a polite question by a coloured man, and addressed in the customary Afrikaans manner as "swaer", or brother-in-law, once picked up the questioner clean off the sidewalk in order to smash in his mouth with a fist. The violence of this response is typical, nor is the subconscious reflex behind it so very hard to infer. One way in which a dark-skinned citizen can repudiate his own appearance and establish his status as a white man—at least to his own satisfaction—is to treat all blacks and obvious halfbreeds with a harsh contempt, as if it were unthinkable that he should have anything in common with them.

In theory, anyway. In practice of course no man can acquit himself of secret self-condemnation as easily as this, and it is to be feared that the innermost consciousness of many Boers is often a dark tangle of guilt and rage. This the casual onlooker would be unlikely to suspect, and visitors to the Republic are frequently at a loss to reconcile what they see with what they have heard about the racist policies of the Boer group. Such Afrikaans-speaking South Africans as they meet appear to be genial and warm-hearted folk, hospitable almost to excess, and often they come away with the feeling that foreign newspapers have been traducing the Boers in a way that is grossly unfair. They forget that, had they happened to be coloured, the welcome accorded them would have been very different, and because they are unfamiliar with the emotional undercurrents of the country they fail to detect the neurotic sensitivity beneath this friendly warmth. It is a mistake to suppose that all the mentally sick of the world are in-

stantly recognisable by their shredded garments and wild-eyed babbling. Often the psychopath makes a normal enough impression, until assurance leads him to dispel it by producing the fragments of glass he has hoarded in his pockets, supposing them to be diamonds. Something rather similar can be said of the Boers. Although on a cursory view they give the impression of being as equable and generous a people as any in the world, a longer acquaintance with them will usually show how little equability or generosity there actually is in many of their attitudes. Unpredictability, in fact, is one of their most striking qualities. Some years ago a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church was motoring along a dusty road in the interior. Growing irritated at the dust cloud swirling around him in the wake of a car ahead, which he could not pass, he speeded up to close the distance, drew a revolver, and shot the driver of the other car dead. Very few Boers have tempers as murderous as this, but the hair-trigger response to provocation is something shared by a great many of them. As usual, it is symptomatic of a consuming insecurity—of fear that has been repressed and ignored, yet which continues to fester below the level of full consciousness.

What kinds of fear? Some have already been outlined but they are hardly deep enough to account for this furious impulsiveness. To understand the Boer psyche at all fully it is essential to remember the question of race, and the admixture between the black and white races that has already occurred. Consider the case of a not untypical Boer. The mere sight of a Negro will often be enough to set his temper on edge, by reminding him of the fact or possibility of his own coloured descent; yet how, in a country like South Africa, is he to avoid seeing Negroes day after day? It is one of the primary dogmas of his life, impressed upon him by his

politicians, his social theorists, and even the theologians of his Church, that all coloured folk are inferior to whites. How then, if he is dark-skinned himself, or has dark-skinned relatives, can he keep clear of such feelings as guilt, hopelessness, and anger? Carking emotions like these may have been gnawing at his mind since early childhood. Is it to be wondered at if, after that kind of nurture, the mind turns out to be a capricious and drastic instrument of revenge?

I think the rooted fear behind all these insecurities is the fear of extinction. Whether he is willing to admit it or not—even to himself—somewhere in the cellarage of his mind every Boer knows that his nation once mingled freely with the native races of South Africa, and that the evidences of that mingling survive to the present day. If he reads his newspapers he knows too that members of his group, even prominent Boers such as clergymen and politicians, are still sometimes prosecuted under the so-called Immorality Acts, for cohabiting with Negroes. Perhaps if he makes a tremendous effort of candour he can even recognise that Negroes are sexually attractive to him personally, though on a level that tends to be rapacious and brutalized. In these circumstances he comes to dread the thought of total absorption, at some terrible future date, into what South Africans call "a coffee-coloured race"; and because this fear is so basic, a dread lest his people should disappear off the face of the earth, it swamps and intensifies all his other fears. During a visit to South Africa early in this century George Bernard Shaw once remarked that assimilation of the whites by the blacks seemed to him an inevitable part of its destiny. The remark was widely reported, and the editorial cries of outrage which it provoked showed just how sensitive were the nerves which had been grated on. Among the Boers such nerves are especially raw. There is a much longer

record of miscegenation behind their people than behind the British; sexual attraction to Negroes is to this day more common among them than among English-speaking South Africans, partly because of isolation on their farms during adolescence; and, unlike the British, they are so committed to remaining in South Africa that if the Negroes did come to power, and assimilation began, they would be lost, having no other country to which they could flee. Psychologists tell us that most white peoples cherish a subconscious fear of the sexual prowess and fertility of Africans and Asiatics, and that in such regions as Alabama and Mississippi this fear lies dangerously close to the social surface. The same thing holds true for South Africa, particularly for the rural areas; and it is over just those areas that much of the Boer population has been deployed.

SUMMING UP

No one knows better than their author how superficial and summary these comments have been, but if they shed some fresh light on the bicultural dilemma in a country other than Canada they will have served their purpose. Readers familiar with the typical problems of modern African states may be surprised that I should have said so little about the overriding conflict of interests between blacks and whites, and limited my discussion only to those sides of the Negro problem which directly affect relations between the whites. Yet on reflection they will perhaps agree that, however fundamental, the colour conflict is hardly a topic from which a Canadian inquirer is likely to learn much. Problems of colour do exist in Canada, but on so much smaller a scale that it would be unbalanced and profitless to give them extensive treatment in what is to follow.

I have concentrated instead on the relations between Boer and British

because, unique as these are, they bear some resemblance to those between French and English in Canada, and are recognisably "bicultural" in the senses of the word that we have come to accept. Disagreement, mistrust, friction—these elements are as native to the Dominion as they are to the Republic, however distinct the temper of their occurrences here and there. Comparison is our object, and this being so even a certain amount of simplifying may be excusable, if only to throw Canadian problems into a different perspective and a sharper relief. But before proceeding to Canada let us try to sum up, in the broadest terms, the basic situation which we have been considering so far.

Both the Boer group and the British group realize that in the long run it will be to their advantage to achieve a working partnership. Only side by side can they hope to face the ultimate menace of the dispossessed and disaffected majority. Biculturalism is thus as firm an objective for them as it is for most Canadians: indeed in some ways, the white-black balance being so precarious, it is probably even firmer. Yet, as we have seen, all kinds of obstacles stand in the way of a reconciliation between the one white group and the other.

In the first place, each camp is roughly the same in size as the other, and this fact encourages closer feelings of rivalry than might exist between aggregations less evenly matched. Like brothers of fifteen and sixteen, and unlike those of nineteen and nine, they feel themselves to be in competition: each group strives to surpass the other, and to take over control of the country for itself.

In the second place there are a number of factors which have operated, and are still operating, to keep the two camps divided. There is the heritage of the recent past, when they were openly at war with each other;

there is the global environment in which they find themselves, one which persistently favours the cultural traditions of the British over those of the Boers; and there are the many social and economic causes for disaffection and envy among the Boers. No one of these factors raises problems that are insoluble, perhaps, but together they make up a formidable obstruction in the path of bicultural progress.

In the third place, and crucially, there is the challenge of the blacks—a group which constitutes four fifths of the total population and which no amount of political magic will ever succeed in spiriting away. Serious enough in itself, this challenge is made many times more serious by the lack of accord between the white groups as to quite how to meet it. Where the Boers have a single clear object—subjugation—the British still hanker after a more equitable settlement, risky as many of them know it would be; and even slight disagreements, on an issue as explosive as this, are enough to inflame the resentments already in existence between the two white sections. The mere fact of the blacks' presence accordingly functions as a reservoir of fuel might do, constantly feeding and intensifying the many small brush-fires of hostility springing up between Britishers and Boers. It may be that during the decades to come, as the Negroes grow more and more difficult to restrain and the glow of a much fiercer conflagration appears on the horizon, sheer anxiety will drive the white groups closer together. Fear gives force to the laager philosophy propounded by some South Africans, the idea that all the whites in the country should close their ranks to confront the common black enemy, and there are some signs that this is already happening, slow and reluctant as the coming together may be. But biculturalism in the true sense is not to be equated with a forced and jealous alliance of this kind, and the prospects for a genuine

partnership between the white groups must be as dim today as they ever were. Even the Boers seem to sense it. The mood of the country has changed from a facile optimism, according to which the Nationalist Government was on the brink of solving every problem in sight, to a sullen resolve to hang on until the end. "We may be destroyed, but if we are, we shall drag a world with us—a world in flames." So Hitler declared, when a posture of après nous le déluge was the only one left for him to strike. In much the same spirit the Boers now declare, not that they will save the country from disaster, but that they are ready to a man to die in defence of their beliefs. Given time, they may well be required to. Many of the British will have to die with them, and it is hard to feel that the prospect makes them feel any friendlier to the Nationalists who now control their fate.

II

What about Canada? Turning from the situation in the Republic to that in the Dominion is almost like turning from Wuthering Heights—all that passion, that rapacity, that harshness—to the mildness and civility of Thrushcross Grange. This contrast may be permitted to hearten us a little, and even a lot, but if encouragement degenerates into complacency it will prove as futile a reaction as despair. No writer on the topic of biculturalism can afford to underestimate the very real hindrances impeding its progress in this country too. These I shall presently be considering, but perhaps to begin with it will be useful to project South Africa's problems against the Canadian scene, so as to focus more sharply the advantages and disadvantages which, as against white South Africans, Canadians would appear

to enjoy. By now it will be obvious that on the whole we have signal advantages, but it is still advisable to mark these off with some precision, lest a vague feeling of optimism should magnify them too far. For that reason it may be prudent to begin with a field in which the advantage is more with South Africa than with Canada.

CONSTITUTIONS

The South African counterpart of the British North America Act was the South Africa Act of 1909. Forty years lay between these enactments, forty years of wise experience, and there can be no doubt that on some points the later Act is less equivocal than its predecessor of 1867 had been. Here is an important provision, Section 133 of the British North America Act:

Either the English or the French language may be used by any person in the debates of the Houses of Parliament of Canada and of the Houses of the Legislature of Quebec; and both those languages shall be used in the respective records and journals of those Houses; and either of those languages may be used by any person or in any pleading or process in or issuing from any court of Canada established under this Act, and in or from all or any of the courts of Quebec.

And here for purposes of comparison is the later equivalent, Section 137 of the South Africa Act:

Both the English and Dutch [later amended to include Afrikaans] languages shall be official languages of the Union, and shall be treated on a footing of equality, and possess and enjoy equal freedom, rights, and privileges; all records, journals, and proceedings



of Parliament shall be kept in both languages, and all bills, Acts, and notices of general public importance or interest issued by the Government of the Union shall be in both languages.

It will be seen that, even as they stand, the South African provisions make it reasonably clear that the merging of the Boer and British provinces was meant to proceed on a basis of complete equality, and that the inference of a founding partnership could be drawn from them without straining at their terms. The Canadian provisions, however, are less explicit. The rule of interpretation is that statutes must be very strictly construed, and if Section 133 is interpreted in that way it is possible to argue that the founding partnership in Canada between English and French is no more than an assumption, one which is unjustified by the wording of the Act and which accordingly can have no legal force in the Dominion today. So indeed some Canadians still argue the case, if only from lack of sympathy with the aspirations of modern French Canada.

Arguments about a constitution tend to be inconclusive, but it seems to me that this line of reasoning obscures or fudges a basic difference between the British way with constitutional documents and the American custom of phrasing preambles with some inclusiveness whenever the enactment to which they are prefixed is to be broad and sweeping in its effects. Having been born in an age of self-conscious revolution, American charters like the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights not unnaturally spelled out the broad principles upon which they were founded, but to look for a similar explicitness in the statutes of the British Parliament is to go wrong from the start. Even in the preamble to the South Africa Act we find only laconic references to convenience ("whereas it is expedient to make provision for the union of the Colonies"), with no overt recognition

of the racial partnership to which the Act gave rise. Why then should the taciturnity of the British North America Act on this subject be taken to mean that no such partnership was contemplated? In the British tradition any constitution is an amalgam of statute and custom, and neither ingredient should displace the other. Indeed to concentrate only on the written provisions of the British North America Act would be to eliminate all kinds of necessities—such as the office of Prime Minister, or the Party System—with which they did not deal. Surely against this we can set the avowed convictions of many of the Fathers of Confederation, the latter part of Section 133, dealing with the right of all citizens to plead their cause before the courts in either language, and the example of the Manitoba Act of 1870, which provided for a bilingual compromise similar to that already in existence in Quebec. However restrictively the constitutional lawyer may be obliged to construe the provisions of 1867, for the ordinary citizen their total effect is the establishment of some kind of partnership between the founding races of English and French. It is unhappily true that Manitoba subsequently went back on its policy of bilingualism, but that fact in itself should indicate pretty clearly where the constitutional difficulty really lies. Any ambiguity in the founding partnership is not to be imputed to the Act, however insipid its recognition of Confederation may now appear, but to subsequent erosions in the rights of the French minority. Anglo-Canadians may have a less explicit mandate for their partnership than British South Africans, and they may in the past have made conscious efforts to unbalance it; but this does not mean that the spirit of Confederation never existed, nor that English Canada has no obligation to French Canada at the present time. On the contrary, Anglo-Canadian obligations are all the stronger because of the depredations of the past.

HISTORY

The mere fact that over two centuries have elapsed since Wolfe's defeat of Montcalm ensures that past history is much less of a block to biculturalism in Canada than it is in South Africa. In more precise terms, the battle between French and English has retreated into a truly historical perspective, well clear of the mythic twilight which often beshrouds events of the recent and controversial past. This can be seen at once if one considers the common Boer attitude toward their defeat of 1902. That it occurred they must grudgingly admit, but to sweeten the admission they have accustomed themselves to levelling charges of extreme cruelty and even of germ warfare against the British, charges for which no shred of historical evidence can be found. The cold facts are that during the Boer War many Boer women and children were brought into the British concentration camps—in most cases for their own protection—and that some of these detainees were infected with enteric and typhoid fever. At that time such diseases were very hard to control, and it wasn't long before epidemics broke out in the camps. Historians have shown that the outbreaks killed a higher percentage of redcoats than they did of internees, and that they were as fortuitous as lightning, but hardly any Boers will accept these conclusions today. They prefer the account which maintains that their people were deliberately massacred, and so established has this fiction become that nowadays it is a commonplace even in the mouths of Dutch Reformed pastors preaching from the pulpit. History has been displaced by mythology, so as to yield a lasting nutriment on which resentment can feed.

There is no real equivalent for this sort of thing in Canada. It is true that the defeat of 1759 was a real humiliation to the French, and true that the thought of it still rankles, particularly in the face of smug

Anglo-Saxon memorials to the victory of Wolfe's army, memorials for which there might be some justification in Ontario but which in Quebec are about as sedative as vitriol in an open graze. No one could pretend, however, that there has been any systematic attempt by French Canadians to rewrite the terms of history so as to turn Wolfe and his men into merciless butchers intent on a slaughter of the innocents; still less could it be claimed that Quebec now accepts such a view in defiance of the facts. To compare the Boer and French-Canadian attitudes in this matter is to realize that, far from being similar, they are actually reversed. In the case of the Boers an imaginary past has been invented as a justification, in part, for the resentments of the present. In the case of the French Canadians it is only because certain resentments still persist that the past retains the power to wound at all. If today the Québécois were thoroughly satisfied with their lot even Wolfe's statue might pass unnoticed, or be simply a curiosity of history like Hadrian's Wall. Past conflict, then, is a much less serious source of mistrust in Canada than in South Africa.

CULTURE

With reservations, much the same might be said of French Canadians' cultural isolation, which in comparison with that of the Boers appears slight to the point of non-existence. Except on the lips of a rare habitant the French spoken by Frenchmen in Canada is still recognisably the same language as that spoken in Europe, and when it is written down it is indistinguishable, apart from a few anglicisms in vocabulary, from the French of France. It would perhaps be an exaggeration to say that French Canadians have always prided themselves on their European heritage, but clearly they have not made the efforts of the Boers to cut themselves off from it. Latterly indeed they have come to see themselves as partakers in

a cultural league of worldwide proportions, along with countries like Belgium, Switzerland, Algeria, and Morocco.

Reservations are proper, however, because of the proximity of the United States and the threat which its dominance poses to the survival of French in North America. The threat is real enough, and the French minorities in far-flung provinces are acutely aware of it; yet even when full allowance has been made for it the French position in Canada does not seem truly comparable to that of the Boers. Cultural security is not simply dependant on what threatens you; it is also a product of what you have. And, even on a Francophobic estimate, the general cultural traditions of France and other countries, and of Quebec itself, provide French Canadians with a significant estate.

In comparison with their endowment what the Boers can boast of is pitifully slight. This is not just because Afrikaans literature is limited in quantity: what is much more serious is that it is so limited in scope. The best Afrikaans novels, even in the eyes of Afrikaans critics, have been those which presented the viewpoint of some animal—a baboon, badger, or lion—and, as Roy Campbell once implied in commenting on an Afrikaans poem about an ox, for a writer to identify his mind and spirit with this kind of subject is scarcely an artistic achievement of the highest order. Well-written though they are, books like Kees Van Die Kalahari and Uit Oerwoud En Vlake are lamentably escapist in conception, for by confining his viewpoint in them to a beast's awareness the novelist has shuffled off all the responsibilities of adult human life. When a Boer writer attempts something more ambitious than this the result is likely to be intolerably sentimental, like the love-story Sy Kom Met Die Sekelmaan, or weirdly distorted by nationalistic fervour. In one of the most admired volumes of

poetry by one of the most distinguished Afrikaans poets, Die Halwe Kring by N. P. Van Wyk Louw, published in 1942, there is a sequence of nine poems in which fanatical comrades are forever bracing themselves against the coming attack by some unidentified enemy, invoking God to assist them, and the like. Van Wyk Louw is one of the Boer liberals, which may account for his coy reluctance to say just who this enemy is, but no Boer could read the poems without divining at once that it is the British of forty years before. The whole sequence, in fact, is a piece of artistic dishonesty, arousing all kinds of immature feelings of enmity and Blutbrüderschaft and yet shrinking from a clear admission of what its object really is.

Such compositions are inferior even to the poems-about-the-writing-of-poems so common today, but they are typical. The Boers have cut themselves off from their European traditions, literary as well as linguistic, and in the condition of cultural rootlessness that afflicts them any real maturity of interest is all but impossible. They cling to their sheep-soliloquies and flag-flappings as if these were the Iliad or War And Peace, but with a nagging awareness of just how negligible such things are, how prone to displacement even by James Bond or The Saturday Evening Post. The literary achievement of Quebec may not as yet have come within range of Virgil or Tolstoy but it would be absurd to pretend that it is as insecure as this. French Canadians have the full weight of French civilization behind them, their artistic interests are frequently more mature than those of Anglo-Canadian writers, and they have a language that speaks to the world at large. In these circumstances a certain degree of self-reliance is hardly surprising. What would be surprising, even when the cultural pressure of America is borne in mind, would be to find them as touchy and irritable on questions of language and culture as most of the Boers.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FRICTIONS

Only when we come to our third category does any real affinity begin to be seen between the French-Canadian position and that of the Boers. Just as the Boers do, Frenchmen in Canada know that a disproportionate share of their country's wealth has been gathered into Anglo-Saxon hands; they see how much easier it has been for Anglo-Canadians to advance themselves in the general economy; and they are sharply conscious of having long been patronized, treated as something of a marginal group with only dubious claims to a full and equal social status. A close-lipped people, and well schooled in the invidiousness of Negrophobia or anti-Semitism, Anglo-Canadians are slow to avow this prejudice unequivocally and in public. It is there, all the same, and almost any French Canadian could illustrate its prevalence by citing incidents from his own life. The unilingual inscriptions on war memorials commemorating Canadian casualties, the coolness of professional colleagues (as in the ^{recent} case of station CJBC in Toronto), fragments of conversation overheard in a bus—from a thousand everyday sources the antennae of French sensitivity, tuned to acuteness, draw in proof after proof of the smugness and condescension of English Canada. At this date there is little need to cite instances at length. We all know that these discriminations exist, and it is part of our dilemma that only recently have the French begun to call them to account. Long secure in his ascendancy, only in the past few years has the Anglo-Canadian been required to defend it, or even examine it.

This Anglo-Canadian snobbishness parallels the condescension of Britisher to Boer in South Africa, and perhaps if we think of both countries simultaneously a point of real significance will begin to emerge. The

Britisher in South Africa can scarcely be held responsible for Boer distortions of history, or even for the state of jeopardy in which Boer culture now exists. It is not his fault either that the Boer approach to the problem of the blacks should be so intractable, or so different from his own. The one clear responsibility he has for aggravating the friction between whites and whites lies in the social or economic sphere, and although this may be heavy one would be hard put to call it decisive. Obstructions to South African biculturalism would accordingly appear to spring mainly from the Boers. Their attitudes have provided the stumbling blocks, and for those attitudes the British deserve only a fraction of the blame. In Canada, on the other hand, the real causes of friction seem to be social and economic, and these are causes for which it is very difficult to blame the French. Social provocation has come from English Canadians, almost exclusively, and it has helped to determine not only the social status of the French but their economic status as well.

I feel this conclusion is grave enough to excuse a certain amount of circuitousness in arriving at it. What are we saying? In sum, that biculturalism in Canada hardly seems to be a French problem at all. In the past few years it has become one, but basically it has been an English problem, for the root of it is English. Consider for a moment the following sentence in the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism's Preliminary Report:

Many times during our regional meetings, we felt that from a certain point of view, the very existence of Quebec separatism is a response to the unitary concept of Canada held by English-speaking Canadians: people who felt that, because of their cultural and linguistic differences, they were being pushed into a reserve, concluded that the

only way out was to build an independent state where they would be free.

In my opinion this could be generalized even further. Whatever resentments French Canadians now harbour have not been generated spontaneously, of themselves. They are responses, rejoinders in a dialogue where the initiative has always been with the snubs and challenges which provoked them: that is, with English Canada.

ANOTHER ROOTED FEAR

Indeed one may go further still, raising a very delicate but very important subject which appears to be wholly ignored in the Commission's Preliminary Report. So far we have been content with the simple equation that Anglo-Canadian is to Frenchman roughly as British South African is to Boer, but as soon as this subject comes up the equation is altered. Anglo-Protestant is to Frenchman, it now seems to read, almost as Boer is to Negro.

I am referring to something largely subliminal or subconscious, and therefore just as hard to dogmatize about as the Boers' fear of engulfment by the blacks: namely, the persistent fear among Protestants of a rising Catholic birthrate, and of engulfment in very similar terms. A general apprehensiveness on this score can be detected in many everyday conversations between English Canadians; it may well be dimly reflected in the steady preoccupation with the subject of birth control in our newspapers and national magazines; and the very fact that deponents before the Commission failed to raise or to stress it suggests that it has its dangerous side, like any other repressed or dirty secret proliferating in the dark. Protestantism and Catholicism are historical adversaries, to be sure, both

in Canada and in the world at large; but mere history seems inadequate to account for the virulent anti-Catholicism sometimes encountered in English Canada. In Alberta forty years ago, according to one of my friends whose father was a commercial traveller there, and a convert to Rome, the single fact of conversion was enough to reduce a man's livelihood from prosperity to the barest subsistence. Surely it is stretching things to attribute this to history alone?

Admittedly the subject has several sides to it. Much anti-Catholic feeling may proceed from an honest hatred of obscurantism—and it is as well to remember that the barbaric divorce laws in this country are enough by themselves to warrant such a response. But I fear that much of it has a less respectable origin, and is associated with a stereotyped picture of Catholicism that is only too common among Protestants: tenements swarming with foreigners who are poor, priest-ridden, and prolific. What is to become of us, the feeling often is, if they go on breeding like this and crowd us out of our own domain? What lends particular force to this kind of question is the Anglo-Canadian's own habit of appealing to the principle of majority rule. Having long been accustomed to defend his treatment of French Canadians with the argument that he outnumbers them, he is all the more disturbed by the thought of what will happen when the majority is reversed. In Canada we are often appalled by the American propensity for finding Communists behind every bush, but perhaps if we were to reflect about it honestly our Protestant fear of Catholics would not seem so very different. Nor is it far removed from the Boers' fear of absorption by the Negroes into racial oblivion.

THE FRANCO-CANADIANS

What about the Catholic group then? Does what has been said so far

help in any way to set them in a clearer light?

One reason for dwelling on the situation in South Africa has been to sketch in something of the character of the Boers. In them an observer can find nearly all the lineaments of a frustrated and neurotic people, and this sort of knowledge has its uses in any appraisal of French Canada. Irrationality and chauvinism are now so natural to the Boer consciousness that they are hardly recognised as defects any longer, and have been elevated instead to the plane of virtues. A relative of mine in the Republic, casually discussing the Dead Sea Scrolls with an educated Boer woman, was blankly astonished when she informed him that the original manuscript of the Bible had been written in Afrikaans. At a loss to conceive of an "original manuscript" for this particular book, or to understand how it could have been written in a language which only emerged during the present century, he offered a polite demur; but she was adamant. Hebrew texts, Greek, the Latin Vulgate—all, she told him, were simply translations from an Afrikaans original. To the Boer, one may infer, God Himself is also a Boer—sometimes indistinguishable from the current Nationalist Party leader—and any attempt to prove otherwise is liberal propaganda, not to say blasphemy.

The more remote rural communities in Quebec may have their share of superstitions, but it is inconceivable that any educated French Canadian could speak in terms like these. Even if he happened to be extraordinarily eccentric, the whole tradition of French logic and rationality would be there to safeguard him from talking nonsense with such bland self-confidence. Thus comparison allows us to make an immediate distinction between the attitude of the Boers and that of the French Canadians on grounds of reasonableness; but in my view further comparison allows us to draw another distinction too, on grounds of moderation.

Thanks to the assiduous reporting of all the F.L.Q.'s activities in our newspapers this will appear a highly questionable assertion. But anyone who had some experience of South African affairs during the last war will recall the existence of an organized fascist underground named Die Ossewabrandwag ("The Ox-wagon Sentinels"), and will know that in comparison with their depredations those of the F.L.Q., however vicious, are mild indeed. Merely to imagine what Canada would be like if Quebec happened to be Afrikaans is a revelation, for one sees at once that Confederation would long since have broken down. Far from the Séparatistes being a small group of extremists, mistrusted by the majority and publicly scolded by the Premier, the whole French population would be Séparatistes, hysterically opposed to Anglo-Canada.

I do not wish to underrate the present ferment among the Québécois or the groundswell of intolerance which seems to be forming under it. Young French Canadians in particular are moving steadily closer to the position of the Boers with every day, a position of complete intransigence. Yet even when these tendencies are taken into full account there still remains a measurable difference between French Canada's indignation and the obsessional hysteria of Boer Nationalism. It is sometimes contended, in Ontario or British Columbia, that Franco-Canadians are hysterical, that they suffer from an inferiority complex which no amount of indulgence will appease. Advocates of this view seem to forget, however, that the true symptoms of an inferiority complex are wild aggressiveness, hypersensitivity to affronts, and a compulsion to brag about oneself. Such qualities are obvious in some of the Séparatistes (though to judge from his demeanour during television interviews M. Chaput is strangely free of them), but to ascribe them to Quebec as a whole would be to exaggerate, even today.

What one perceives in South Africa among the Boers is a settled and truly neurotic belligerence, and the problem of its existence now appears to be soluble only on a psychiatrist's terms. What one senses in Quebec among the French is a sudden upsurge of pride and decision: excitement at attaining a new vision, indignation at the way Anglo-Canada has been obscuring it, and a firm resolve that it must be obscured no more. Such responses may be highly inconvenient for the rest of us but if we put them down to an inferiority complex we shall only be revealing our ignorance of psychological categories. On the most sober estimate the importunity of modern Quebec is healthier than the blind fanaticism of the Boers, if only for the reason that its objectives can be defined, and are therefore susceptible of eventual satisfaction. Much that is currently being said in English Canada about Quebec's irrationality accordingly seems a little off the mark. Would we not be better occupied in trying to assess our own?

THE ANGLO-CANADIANS

The power structure in Canadian society has lately been described as a vertical mosaic, rising to a privileged élite of Anglo-Saxons. Perhaps in itself this is a further argument against the notion of a French inferiority complex, since if the complex existed it would seriously have hindered English enterprise through its aggressiveness, and long since cast off English domination. In view of the evidence Mr. Porter has assembled there can be little doubt that his mosaic really exists, but to discuss it here with any profit we had better try to separate its economic from its social aspect, however interwoven in practice these may be.

Probably few of us would care to say just where the blame should lie for the economic inequities in our country today. Anglo-Canadians usually

choose to blame the relative poverty of the French on Gallic indifference, sloth, or stupidity; Franco-Canadians blame it on English rapacity and the closed shop of Bay Street commerce. To arbitrate between these views may be impossible, especially when we remember how much of our economy is tied in with English-speaking America, and perhaps the best course is simply to say that the blame is shared. If this is an evasion at least it is one which allows us to pass at once to social matters, where the apportionment of blame is much less difficult.

No class or group seeks out an inferior social status of its own volition. Inferiority is something imposed upon it by a more powerful class or group, which profits from the imposition. One can appreciate that in a bygone era, Wolfe having conquered French Canada, English patronage of all things French in this country may have served a clear, if not particularly creditable, purpose. The real problem is to analyse why it should have continued beyond Confederation, especially since Anglo-Canadians have long been secure from any threat of Lower Canada's rising against them. It is for the strong to make concessions, not the weak, when a form of partnership between them has been proposed. Why then, for a hundred years, should Anglo-Canada have done so little—in fact almost nothing—to conciliate the French? Why should it be doing so little even today?

The first of these questions I should like to leave for historians to deal with, but the second is probably more crucial and it is one to which every Canadian has the right or duty to reply. Replies will vary, of course, but perhaps it is advisable to concentrate right away on one which has a special interest, since it is often offered by French Canadians. The trials of self-scrutiny seldom afflict the man of privilege, who is

content to savour his position. It is the underdog who thinks about his status most seriously, and when he speaks he is usually worth listening to.

Most French Canadians, it seems, would lay the blame for their social privations on what they identify as Anglo-Saxon hauteur or arrogance. Accepting a Punch-like concept of the Englishman Abroad as an incarnation of vanity and intolerance, they drain off Punch's geniality and are left with a juggernaut of disdain. This is the Anglo-Canadian, sublimely assured of his own desert, contemptuous of all other groups, and intent on providing for himself alone. Some French Canadians will concede that the equivalent symbol for Quebec is not much better—a dull submissive yokel named Le Mouton—but this does little to soften their attitude. Le Mouton's sins are sins of omission, they point out, while Juggernaut's are those of commission. French submissiveness may have made it easy for English arrogance to thrive, but the arrogance was always there, and always bad.

Now however mistrustful one may be of national or racial symbols one is bound to admit that there seems some warrant for this view. Significantly enough it is one which the Boers also take, as we have seen. English condescension toward the French is simply a fact of our national existence today; and with it goes a form of insularity which is equally repugnant to Quebec, an unquestioning belief or trust in all things English. Both traits are so ingrained that sometimes they are not without their lighter side. This appeared, for instance, in a letter to a Victoria newspaper published soon after the adoption of the new Canadian flag. The correspondent, an Anglo-Canadian, began by deploring the loss of the old ensign and then went on to say, with some heat, that it was utterly unreasonable to expect his wife and him to go on living in this country under a maple leaf. They were accordingly leaving British Columbia to settle (he was oddly confiding

here) in Oregon. Self-loving Anglophilia usually takes less curious forms, even on Vancouver Island, but in one guise or another it is common all across English Canada, as is the intolerance toward le fait Francais associated with it.

Such an analysis has its value, then, but it should be obvious that to rely on it alone would be shortsighted. To suppose that high-handedness is a simple and invariable ingredient in the English character, at home and abroad, would be to break sociology down into stereotypes, confusing the issue even further. How close to complex reality can one hope to get by invoking a sneering image of John Bull? What seems to be needed is some analysis of the Anglo-Canadian psyche as a whole—which is to say of the general position of Anglo-Canada as a political identity, and of the main pressures working upon it. If the bicultural problem in this country is really an English one, and if the arrogance of Anglo-Canadian behaviour has done so much to inflame it, then surely the reasons for that behaviour will bear some pondering. I am aware that this is very thin ice upon which to venture forth, and all the thinner in view of William Blake's reminder that "to generalize is to be an idiot". All the same, it seems to be necessary. We have already noted that there is probably a rooted fear among Anglo-Canadians that the French population will spread and engulf them. May their attitude not comprise other fears as well, subconscious anxieties which help to explain why French Canadians should find them so arrogant?

THE ILLUSION OF CONSEQUENCE

How does the Anglo-Canadian see his country?

Like the average citizen of most other countries he sees her with a

great deal of pride, and he has the advantage over many of them in being able to offer substantial reasons for how he feels. Canada has the second largest land-mass of any country in the world. Her history, notably the history of her explorers, is something of an epic of enterprise and endurance. Her natural resources beggar description, and her people enjoy one of the highest standards of living yet attained. Any polyethnic society is likely to incur some inequities, but on the whole Canadians are not unreasonable in feeling that they live in a society which is stable, industrious, and just. On the most modest assessment they have much on which to pride themselves, and even a trace of immodesty would be pardonable. The marked differences between one region of his homeland and another imbue the average Canadian with a sense of its size and comprehensiveness, and the respect with which he is greeted abroad encourages his self-esteem. If Paul was a citizen of no mean city the modern Canadian is surely a citizen of no mean state.

All this will bear some emphasizing, as simple fact, but when one has lived in the country for many years it is difficult to resist the impression that Canadian national pride often tends to exceed the facts, imposing as they are. Or rather it would be more accurate to say that Canadian aspirations often seem to be overweening, to strain beyond their natural scope. To put it in the bluntest terms, we seem reluctant to assess ourselves as a distinguished nation of the second rank; instead we strive to emulate the premier powers—Great Britain, Russia, and above all the United States—and to accept our rôle in world affairs as one of weighty consequence. Awareness of our geographic size and mineral wealth inclines us to forget that our total population is only that of California or Ethiopia, and that for every lone Canadian in this spacious land there are still, even after

the ravages of the last World War, three Britishers huddled into the United Kingdom—and ten Americans in the United States, and twelve Russians in the Soviet Union. It will at once be retorted that no Canadian seriously compares the stature and influence of his homeland with those of the giant powers like Russia or America, but this is true only so long as a heavy emphasis is placed on the one word seriously. Unconsciously, unthinkingly, we are coming more and more to accept ourselves in just these terms.

Believing that we have an enlightened contribution to make to the politics of the world, as we surely have, we have allowed the belief to become inflated into a conviction that such a contribution is ours by right. All too readily do we see ourselves as an irreplaceable hinge in the comity of western nations, the interpreter without whose mediation Great Britain and the United States can scarcely hope to understand each other.

For this illusion—and it needs to be recognised as one—recent history must bear some of the blame. During the Second World War both Churchill and Roosevelt encouraged Mackenzie King to feel that Canada was a major partner in the western alliance, and it is not surprising that this view was quickly passed down to less eminent Canadians. It persisted after the War, and was perceptibly strengthened during the Suez crisis of 1956, when again Canadian prestige took a leap into salience. Objective or external causes like these have had a decisive effect on the image of ourselves which we have adopted, but is that all? On a closer view it would seem that subjective or internal causes have been just as decisive. For decade after decade now we have been standing in the shadow of two giant powers, Great Britain and the United States, with both of which our ties are very close. It appears that this proximity, mainly cultural and historic on the one hand, geographical and economic on the other, has led

us more and more to approximate our status to theirs, to see Canada not as a middleweight power but as a full co-partner in a triad of greatness, no more negligible than the other two. If we have a rather exaggerated view of our importance it is partly of our own creation, through the posture of rivalry that we have come gradually and unwittingly to adopt.

LITTLE BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU

Let me make it clear that I am far from assailing this as a long-term ambition. We are a rich and enlightened country, and why should we not one day be one of the leading nations of the world? What concerns me is our readiness to anticipate this elevation, and this is worrying not because it is either absurd or ignoble but simply because of the tensions to which it gives rise.

A complex edginess toward Great Britain for example, partly envy and partly a compulsion to justify ourselves, may be detected in many Canadians whose interests incline toward the arts. We have modelled our Canada Council partly on the Arts Council of Great Britain; we are fiercely proud of compatriots like Jon Vickers and Lynn Seymour who have won acclaim from British audiences; and we are almost relieved when a touring company of English actors, such as Donald Wolfit's, falls below the standard we have set for our own performers. So necessary is it for us to boost our cultural achievements that occasionally the claims we make for them become outrageous. The editor of Northern Review, for instance, once seriously declared that the three major poets in English of the Twentieth Century were T. S. Eliot, W. B. Yeats, and E. J. Pratt. Such wildness of judgment comes disturbingly close to the Afrikaans first manuscript of the Bible, but even when the judgments we offer are more disciplined they tend to be

inflated. In cultural matters, it is clear, we are at much the same stage as the Americans were in Matthew Arnold's day. Obligated to defer to European achievements, resenting the obligation, we find coolness of judgment very difficult and are constantly sniping at Britain in order to aggrandize what Canadian artists and writers have managed to achieve. In matters intellectual something of the same edginess exists. I recall a Winnipeg cocktail party in the early fifties at which three graduates of the University of Toronto gave an inordinately detailed account of all the courses they had taken there, merely to impress upon the graduates of British universities who were present that Canadian academic standards were high. It seemed to occur to none of them that this was something all their auditors already knew.

If British culture and education are thorns in our flesh, however, the achievements in all fields of our immediate neighbour, the United States, are spears of anguish. Canadians rightly pride themselves on their readiness to defend Americans against the uncomprehending criticisms so often levelled by Europeans, but it is no exaggeration to say that our own attitude toward America is fast assuming the proportions of a national disgrace. This does not mean, of course, that the attitude is an official one, reflected in the policy of our federal or provincial governments. Officially, and on the public platform, we have long been at pains to emphasize what friendly relations we enjoy with the United States. It is only unofficially and in private that our resentments unmask themselves frankly, but when they do they are disquietingly sharp, and sometimes rabid.

Any smaller nation with a very powerful neighbour adjoining it is prone to feel like this, particularly when much of its native talent is

constantly being creamed off in the exodus to greener fields. We have only to think of Scotland, and of the Scottish Nationalists, to see that this is so. What aggravates Canadian resentment is, first, the fact that in our case the neighbour is a separate country, politically quite distinct, and secondly the fact that it is a country which we are hellbent on emulating in every way we can. In itself such emulation can be a very good thing: the Shower of Dimes is an estimable fund, even if its name is cribbed from the March, and our contributions to the Colombo Plan are not to be decried simply because they have been partly due to the wish to devise a Marshall Plan of our own. But emulation is seldom without its undertow of jealousy, and for years now our jealousy of the United States has passed all reasonable bounds. This is not to pretend that it is violent, the sort of prejudice which explodes into action with bombs and demonstrations. If it were we should undoubtedly be much more aware of it than we are, and might be taking steps to curb its rise. The form it takes is more insidious, being subdued and yet at the same time unrelenting. Anti-Americanism has entered into the very atmosphere we breathe, so that it requires a conscious effort to remind ourselves how much of it there is about. The flimsiest pretext allows it to come forward, and when it does we usually try to make it look casual and inconsequential, so that if it is questioned—by others, or even by ourselves—we can easily pretend that it has no significance and was only a passing thought along the way. Here are the opening sentences of a book review published in a Saskatchewan newspaper, one item among thousands that could be used to illustrate the point:

George Cuomo lives in British Columbia with his wife and five children and teaches English at the University of Victoria. He is, however, an American (I guess we have to give that word to citizens

of the United States, however limited is their claim to be the only inhabitants of this continent), and his big, boisterous novel Bright Day, Dark Runner is as "American" as the Bronx where Mr.

Cuomo and his hero, J. I. LeBlanche, were born.

The niggling pettiness of that parenthesis, intruding even before the book under review has been identified, accurately reflects Canadian hypersensitivity to so much that is American, and yet in itself of course it is as casual and breezy as could be. One such instance proves nothing, but when they are multiplied a thousandfold, as they are today, the sickness grows disturbing. It is almost as though we all sat staring goggle-eyed across our southern border, noting every move that was being made there, a prey to endless moods of envy, insecurity, and doubt of our own identity.

BIG BROTHER ISN'T

Obviously what exacerbates these moods is our knowledge that across the border Canadian affairs are regarded with a large indifference. In a C.B.C. broadcast shortly before the last Republican Convention in San Francisco a well-known Canadian commentator began by pointing out that in the next few weeks we would be hearing a great deal about American electoral procedures and then broke off to ask, in a tone midway between wistfulness and exasperation, "Isn't it too bad that Americans don't take the same interest in Canadian elections and Canadian politics?" He was revealing the premise—often a quite unconscious one—behind much of our irritation with the United States: if we are so obsessively interested in everything taking place below the forty-ninth parallel, why can't they have the decency to reciprocate?

As soon as this sort of assumption is dragged out into full daylight

the voice of reason gets a chance to speak up and correct it. The United States is a vast and complex country, heavily populated, and the internal and external demands upon it are already excessive. The pre-eminence which has been thrust on it is still too recent to be other than rather bewildering, and even if this were not the case Americans would be bound to concentrate their attention on trouble-spots like Berlin and the Dominican Republic and Viet Nam. To expect a like attentiveness to events in a neighbouring state as stable and democratic as Canada is utterly unrealistic. That we should be acutely aware of the policies of a giant neighbour is only reasonable, since any shocks to which they give rise are likely to be felt from Newfoundland to the Pacific. That our neighbours should feel the same consuming interest in events and decisions up here is an expectation which only our vaunting ambition leads us to cherish.

So I believe every Canadian with a proper sense of proportion, given time to think the matter through, would sum it up. But in the haste of everyday life proportion gives way to prickliness and insecurity, so that the query of the C.B.C. man becomes the lament of us all. Why don't they admire us? Why don't they hang on our every word and deed? Since we are nine times the size of Cuba why don't they give us nine times the attention they give to Castro and his doings? What is so ironic about our umbrage at American neglect is that if it were corrected, replaced by the close attention we hunger for, our reputation among Americans would probably suffer a sharp decline. In a recent canvas of American opinion by the Institute for Analytical Research of Peekskill, New York, it was noted that "Almost without exception our respondents regard Canadians as honest, hard-working, trustworthy people of high moral caliber"—to put it less diplomatically, as stolid and dull—yet at the same time the research team

observed a "widespread ignorance about the crucial facts of Canadian life". It is hard not to feel that the one finding interlocks with the other. Americans who come to know us better are often startled to discover how thin-skinned and irritable we can be, and one of them, Professor Mason Wade of the University of Rochester, has lately told the Canadian Historical Association that the "favourite Canadian sport after hockey and contemplating the national navel is taking a dim view of the United States". Such things are uncomfortable to hear but they desperately need saying. Lulled by the complacencies of our journalists and radio commentators, whose unspoken watchword often seems to be "Those fools in Washington", we are in serious danger of forgetting how neurotic we have been allowing ourselves to grow. The best commentary I have seen on the whole subject was the Spring Thaw skit in which the silly truculence of a Canadian couple was brilliantly contrasted with the puzzled friendliness of their American visitors. One would like to see it repeated at regular intervals, as a form of national therapy.

WHAT IS ARROGANCE?

According to Professor Wade all Canadians share this readiness to berate America, but I believe a distinction ought to be made between the realistic fear of American domination which French Canadians feel and the petulant jealousy which is fused into it to form the attitude of English Canada. All of us fear the United States' economic power, and it is only reasonable that we should; but this fear seems to be differently constituted as it affects English Canadians and French ones. In the French case it is combined with a second fear, equally rational, that the English of America will come in time to oust their language from this continent. In the case

of the rest of us, with no marked divergences of language, culture, or religion to differentiate us from Americans, the fear becomes more emotional, with a contorted and surreptitious side to it which makes it very much harder for reason to control.

Now surely we have here a more plausible explanation of Anglo-Canadian arrogance than that afforded by the rather naive diagnosis of French Canada, which identifies an overbearing manner with the mere condition of being English. Pricked on by their own insecurities French Canadians have failed to appreciate that the insecurities of their compatriots are at least as grave, and probably worse. Obviously it would be untrue to say that Anglo-Canadians are as irrational as the South African Boers, but the subconscious strain of trying to vie with both Britain and America sometimes pushes us uncomfortably close. Any man who sets his sights beyond his capabilities is going to fall short. As a result he will suffer the pangs of inadequacy, and if these are severe enough they will make him very difficult to get along with, converting him into a person who is touchy, boastful, and arrogantly self-centred.

Analogies between single individuals and whole countries are easy to discount, but in this case the comparison seems justified, for what is the national attitude here but the sum of attitudes among its individuals? Canadian scientists are being constantly and unsettlingly reminded of the achievements of their confrères in America; Canadian writers feel the same; Canadian politicians, educators, doctors, businessmen—all seem to be in much the same position. And these are the chief opinion-builders in our society, the people whose attitudes interpenetrate to form our general consciousness as a nation. The very fact that we set such store by Robert Goulet's adolescence in Alberta, or Saul Bellow's infancy in Montreal, or

even Ernest Hemingway's apprenticeship on the Toronto Star, should indicate how strong our sense of rivalry with the United States has grown. We are unrealistically anxious to bat in the same league as the Americans and British, and this ambition—because it is overweening—bedevils all the self-confidence we might otherwise enjoy. Trying to convince ourselves that it is on the verge of being realized, we forfeit much of the equanimity to which our true capacities have entitled us, and grow irritable and quick to take offence. Arrogance thus arises as a compensation and, since we have only the one smaller brother to bully, Quebec has to bear the brunt of it.

To sum up perhaps we can abandon the image of siblings and invoke another homely one which is more familiar. Let us think of Anglo-Canada as a husband, as is often suggested, and French Canada as a wife. Like so many others in North America their ménage right now is a place of discord and tension, and for reasons which are common in many homes today. The husband is caught up in his work, and so obsessed with trying to reach the top that he has little attention for domestic problems. What particularly worries him is the knowledge that several of his co-workers are experienced or brilliant or wealthy enough to outclass him completely; but still he goes on slaving, trying desperately to persuade himself that one day he will be President of the firm. When he comes home at night he brings with him all the preoccupations of the office, so that he is ill-tempered and on edge, and when his wife embarks on her usual lament that he is neglecting her he reacts with a fury that is directed less at her than at the whole situation in which he finds himself, the sense of being required to perform impossible feats and yet preserve his sweetness too.

This will seem fanciful to many, but I hope there may be a few readers

who will feel that it makes a valid point. Yet even if it does there remains, of course, one further question. Instructed by a popular (and American) magazine, we have still to ask ourselves whether this marriage can be saved.

III

Not at this gait. That is something we ought to be perfectly clear about from the start. Even if the foregoing analysis were full and definitive, as it obviously isn't, the task would be burdensome; when all the other difficulties are taken into account, difficulties that I have shirked in the interests of conciseness, it begins to seem prohibitive. What about the ingrained suspicion between French Catholics and English Protestants, for example? What about the French minority in a province like Manitoba or New Brunswick? What about the sensitivities of other minority groups--the Ukrainians, the Germans, the Icelanders and Italians? On the most cursory view it should be plain that the prospect before us is a difficult and confusing one; yet to tell the truth even today we often seem to be making only derisory efforts to cope with it. Some western newspapers now print English translations of selected editorials from Quebec, which their readers skip, and the C.B.C. offers an occasional programme in which a young French Canadian is allowed or incited to speak fairly warmly about Toronto, though for no reason discernible even to a Toronto audience. As for those television shows in which vaudeville turns in English are interspersed with other turns in French, their effect is only to irritate both language groups, a backfiring of intent which one would have thought even a simpleton could have foreseen. These semi-

official attempts to promote a new harmony resemble the sartorial choices of my four-year-old daughter, who imagines that by putting on shorts and a halter she can compel the sun to shine.

It is only too evident, from these and other instances, that the Anglo-Canadian response to the challenge of biculturalism is usually to seek out a palliative, some trivial concession which salves the English conscience while doing nothing—occasionally less than nothing—to satisfy the French. Old habits die hard, and the more congenial they are the harder it is to kill them off. The one major concession which English Canada has so far made to le fait Francais, the adoption of the new flag, was more a matter of form than of substance, and even here the impact of good will has been blunted and blurred. For one thing, it was as much a concession to the new immigrants as to the oldest. For another, the public argument which raged around it was so infantile—on both sides—that honest patriots across the country, English and French alike, were shocked and disheartened to overhear it even in snatches. In the long run this may perhaps be no bad thing, since a realistic appraisal of our immaturities as a nation is long overdue. In the short run, however, it has been a gloomy discouragement, and all the worse for coming at a time when courage is sorely needed.

Talking to other Canadians about their reactions to the bicultural problem, and examining my own, I have found that one of the most unsettling things about them is the way they seem to vacillate between confidence and despair, with very little in between. It is like looking at one of those optical puzzles where at one particular moment there are apparently seven cubes retreating to the left, and then at the next eight different ones retreating to the right. In certain moods, comparing the Canadian situation

with situations in other countries, such as South Africa, the task ahead of us appears almost ludicrously simple. Let English Canada demonstrate its good faith, one's feeling is, and harmony is bound to follow: for, as General Vanier has said, "it is inconceivable that the heirs to the two great western civilizations . . . should be unable to find a brotherly way of life". At other times, recalling the rising hostility in Quebec, and recollecting how much of the problem turns on attitudes of mind, attitudes which begin to seem ineradicable, one falls a prey to dejection, as if even the opening moves toward conciliation were now too much to hope for.

Unstable as they are, perhaps these responses can tell us something about our quandary. A man usually responds to a challenge in this fashion only when it is ill-defined; given a plainer view of it he loses his hesitancy and recovers the power to decide and act. Courage in short, though important, is not the only quality we stand in need of. We also need clarity: a lucid assessment of what French Canada wants and of how much English Canada ought to be willing to concede. Let me try to be as lucid about these matters as I can.

SEPARATISM, PRIVILEGE, OR EQUALITY?

Biculturalism cannot hope to reconcile all the French and all the non-French in Canada. What it should aim at is the reconciliation of as many moderates as possible in both camps, building an accord which extremism on both sides would merely serve to reinforce.

Separatism, on this view, is unacceptable, and indeed there are two plain reasons for not accepting it, one particular and one more general. The particular objection concerns the large number of French-speaking Canadians, over 850,000 of them—one French Canadian in every six—who

happen to live outside Quebec. As its advocates represent it, Separatism is a manifestation of the best kind of Franco-Canadian patriotism; but the secession of their parent province from Confederation would abandon these people to assimilation with a cynicism and callousness no true patriot could condone. Too few Séparatistes seem to appreciate what a stigma the deed would set upon their sovereignty, or how slim a chance for self-respect there would be for an emergent republic, already economically precarious, with a birth so shameful to live down. One cannot found a nation in injustice, nor are idealistic slogans worth very much if they cloak a cut-throat selfishness.

Even on its own terms Separatism thus appears to be a pretty ugly alternative, but for most Canadians its ugliness is of an even more obvious and fundamental kind. You do not preserve a country by partition, any more than you save a marriage by divorce, and by giving the Séparatistes their wish all other Canadians would be maiming their motherland beyond recognition. If there is a special character to Canada, apparent to all and requiring no navel-gazing to identify, it lies in our dualism, the intermingling of two distinct traditions, and to give this up just at the moment when we are coming to understand its true value would be craven. The Québécois maintain, with justice, that Confederation has been abused; but that does not mean that the ideals behind it have been discredited, or that spleen must oblige us to abandon them for ever. If in the past French Canadians had made every possible effort to ensure a full partnership, and failed, the demand for independence might be compelling; but how many of their wisest leaders would claim that they had? What they have tended to do instead is to acquiesce in a discreditable situation, and their own acquiescence now estops them from a course which would mean breaking faith

with the past and compromising the future. If there is a single piece of required reading for the Séparatistes it must surely be the story of King Solomon's arbitration between the two mothers who laid claim to the same infant. Like motherhood, real patriotism is not compatible with vindictiveness.

A much more moderate position than Separatism is that which advocates some form of special status for Quebec within Confederation, privileged beyond those of all other provinces, so that the association between French and English Canada can become much less constricting. On the face of it such a remedy has much to recommend it, and lately more and more Canadians seem to have decided that it may be the best way out of our difficulties. They may be right, but I believe we shall be deluding ourselves if we accept such a policy without at the same time maintaining a lively awareness of just how bad, in many ways, it would be. In the first place it would be bad in law, since the effect would almost certainly be to set up a degree of prerogative for certain communities as against the rest. In the second place it would be bad in practice, since it would apply the thin end of a wedge which other provinces—British Columbia is a prime example—would be only too eager to drive home. In the third place, and perhaps most seriously of all, it would be bad in theory, misconceived from the very start. Granted that Quebec has had every provocation for championing its rights, the hard fact remains that this is a poor way to go about doing it. Rights of the kind at issue here are peculiarly tenuous, and no amount of legislation will effectively safeguard them. Respect and consideration are not enforceable by a court of law; they are attitudes of mind that arise from custom and understanding, not from the enactments of a Parliament.

Such objections furnish very cold comfort, and it is easy to see why the doctrine of associate statehood should have gained so much currency in French Canada during the last few years. Under the present system of equality for the provinces French Canadians have been exposed to one affront after another, in public and private, and they would be less than human if they did not want to abolish such treatment once and for all. It may well be that associate statehood is the price English Canada will finally have to pay to keep them in Confederation; but if that is so the price ought to be paid with our eyes open rather than half closed. In a blurred sort of way it is possible to imagine a bipartite Canada functioning fairly smoothly, but how strong will it be to resist the temptation to subdivide itself still further? Ontarians and British Columbians probably find it just as easy to imagine a Canada divided into five, with the Prairies and the Maritimes making up the full sum, but if each of these states was to assume a degree of autonomy equal to Quebec's the result would surely be no less chaotic for us than it was for the Americans prior to the Civil War. What is more disturbing than such speculations, however, is the suspicion that associate statehood would only be a form of symptom-treatment for Quebec's problems, and that the real solution for them can only come from English Canada, from the generosity and good will that have been lacking for so long.

is that of education, though even here there are constitutional problems which would have to be faced. In general, it is clear that the whole subject has been most unhappily confused by the wording of the British North America Act. The Act makes no reference to English and French as languages of instruction, still less to English-medium or French-medium schools, and the consequence has been to remove such topics altogether from the forum of public debate. Instead the provisions of Section 93, with their references to "denominational" and "dissentient" schools, have buried the secular concerns of education under the highly controversial issue of Catholic versus Protestant, thereby allowing non-French provinces to cherish the illusion that a vast Gunpowder Plot was afoot to undermine their civil and religious liberties. During the first fifty years of Confederation Anglo-Canadian suspicion of French intentions never slackened, and even today suspicion is the cause of many violations of the spirit, if not the letter, of the Act. Consider how often among English Canadians legitimate French claims are garbled to support dark predictions that, if Quebec has its way, all other Canadians will be forced to speak French. The whole population will be gallicized, it is said—no doubt paving the way for a vigorous missionary programme to be mounted by the Catholic Church. The whole discussion becomes a jungle of fears and evasions, and the aspiration of French Canadians to preserve their own language and culture for themselves—something we would commend in voodoo-ridden Haitians—becomes a wicked conspiracy.

What is the position at present? In Quebec only one fifth of the population are English-speaking, yet the province guarantees them an education in the language of their choice. In all other provinces the French minorities are denied this right, to a greater or lesser degree, and the only means they have of preserving it is to send their children to

private schools operated by the Catholic Church, thus incurring a double charge of taxation for the education they need. Acting on the principle—blatant enough, if unavowed—that English should prevail, and Protestantism with it, the non-French provinces early established an educational stranglehold on the French Canadians in their midst, and ever since they have in effect been forcing them to abandon their heritage and give up their mother tongue. In one province alone, British Columbia, over sixty per cent of the French have been forcibly anglicized in this fashion. Far from being threatened, Anglo-Canada has been engaged in a wholesale linguistic conversion, by the simple expedient of taking the British North America Act with complacent literalness, and of declaring that even a small number of French-medium schools would put an unbearable charge on the fat public purse.

By any standard, whether of humanity or justice, this is a shameful record. Not only are French Canadians outside Quebec being subjected to cultural slavery but, as the Quebec Chamber of Commerce has recently pointed out, all French citizens are being denied their normal mobility, since by moving out of Quebec they must sacrifice their children's chances of being taught in their mother tongue. Like the carriers of some unseen infection our French compatriots have been kept bottled up in their native province. It is true that latterly one or two provinces with big French minorities, like New Brunswick, have been making tentative efforts to correct these wrongs, but to leave the matter in the hands of provincial governments can only be to abandon a national obligation to local caprice, thus giving the worst kind of arrogance its head once more. Instead of drafting new constitutions to show how sovereign we are, or grandiloquent Bills of Rights, would our federal M. P.s not be better occupied in proving

the sovereignty of Parliament by decreeing that all French minorities of a certain size must be granted an education in their native tongue? Decentralization of the executive power in Canada may be desirable in some fields, and one can understand Quebec's advocacy of it. But for the central authority to waver on an issue as momentous as this will be to foster cultural piracy, as the record is there to show.

It is possible to put the matter more positively. Though such a decree would in fact represent little more than a restoration to French Canadians of a right which, if they were at all in earnest, the Fathers of Confederation must have meant them to enjoy, to pass it at the present time, and implement it across the country, would have an effect out of all proportion to the cause. French Canada often complains that all it can wring from English Canada are trivial concessions, granted with the utmost reluctance, but this would not be a trivial concession. On the contrary, since it would reverse the whole murky current of history, it would represent a dramatic overture of friendship, an unprecedented readiness to take the bicultural partnership as seriously as, in French eyes, it needs to be taken. Magnanimity toward Quebec itself, though obviously desirable, is today perhaps a little suspect, for the simple reason that the province is growing strong enough to insist on it. But this would be a gratuitous act of generosity toward the weak, toward those 850,000 exiles from Lower Canada who are ill equipped to save their language and culture from withering on the branch. As nothing else could, it would demonstrate English Canada's sincere desire to preserve the partnership, spiking the guns of the Séparatistes even as they were loading to be fired.

COMMUNICATIONS

Education in one's own language is by far the most effective way to

maintain a cultural heritage, but it is not the only way. Besides the satisfaction of participating in a tradition of knowledge and attitudes, and passing it on to succeeding generations, a people needs the satisfaction of day-to-day traffic among its members, the sense of community in space as well as time. In the modern world this need usually depends for its satisfaction on the various forms of communication, those invisible threads which stitch a nation's identity together. Most civilized countries today, appreciating that the task is too vital to be entrusted to their newspapers—which must earn their readership to survive—have established state radio and television networks to ensure that it is responsibly performed; and this benefaction is all the more necessary in countries like Canada and South Africa, where the youthful national consciousness is dwarfed by the size of the territory it takes in. Here, with much of the commercial pressure relieved, the delicate business of stitching and seaming can go patiently forward, consolidating the heritage which it was the purpose of education to preserve.

All English-speaking Canadians who have felt a stirring of pride during a C.B.C. News Round Up, with the reports coming in from Saint John's, from Halifax, from Montreal, from Toronto, from Winnipeg, from Regina, from Edmonton, from Vancouver—that tremendous continental sweep—will know how elusive and yet how potent this form of nation-building can be. On the other hand probably only a few of them will remember—or so much as realize—that five of our ten provinces are totally deprived of French television, or that at least three are beyond even radio contact with French Canadians in other regions.

As with education, the justification usually offered for these deprivations is lack of funds. But surely it is time we started asking

ourselves, in that case, whether the funds we have might not be more wisely applied than they have been. Our own social scientists often criticize us for spending so little abroad to rehabilitate poorer nations, and perhaps their criticisms are deserved. Certainly such expenditures have to be seen as a prudent and humane investment, and one would not like to see them cut off. But perhaps an icily critical eye could yet detect that in certain instances they might have been a shade too impulsive, and more concerned to keep up with the Joneses of Britain and America than to settle accounts we could comfortably afford. I have compared the partnership between English and French Canada to a marriage, and it is obvious that, as between spouses, the power of the purse rests largely with the English husband. May it not be true that, like some other husbands in North America, he has been buying more expensive cars than he can really afford, to impress the neighbours, instead of funneling some of his income back into the household to relieve his wife? In such cases it is always easy for the husband to claim that he needs a bigger car, and that expensive models are safer and more reliable than cheap ones. The claim may be sound enough, but one cannot expect a wife who has to wrestle with a leaking sink and an unreliable coal stove to appreciate its soundness in quite the same way.

The analogy seems fair, but it will be sadly misleading if it suggests that French Canadians' need for television and radio links with the rest of their people is a luxury need, as the need for a reception set usually is. On the contrary, this kind of service is very close to a necessity, as essential to their welfare as the housewife's sink or range is to the welfare of her household. No nation, or nation within a nation, can be expected to preserve its identity—or even its composure—if it is fragmented across a distance of three thousand miles with very little to bridge

the gaps between one pocket and the next. Yet modern inventiveness has given the solution into our hands, and all that seems to be lacking is the will to pay for it. No one need suppose that this is a devious plea for isolationism, or a willingness to see our economy turn insular and self-indulgent. All I am saying is that we should also put our own house in order, by applying a fraction of our wealth to further the cause of national unity. To allow French Canadians to be taught in their own language, to extend French network coverage so that they can achieve self-identification through culture and entertainment—these are not, surely, the kind of projects likely to bankrupt the national coffers. Indeed what should recommend them most strongly is the fact that so much cordiality could be bought at so modest a price.

THE MOSAIC OF CONFUSION

Such concessions, it may be objected, will be all very fine for the French; but what about all the other non-English groups in Canada? Isn't it patently unrealistic to go on and on about French and English Canada in this fashion when as a matter of fact nearly thirty per cent of our people are neither English nor French? What about all the Germans and Scandinavians, the Ukrainians, Dutchmen, and Poles? Are they not entitled to much the same treatment if their heritages are to survive in turn? Canadians of German origin are almost as numerous as Torontonians; the Ukrainians could populate Vancouver; our Scandinavians could take over the whole of Greater Calgary. Are cultural enclaves of this size to be written off completely, or blandly passed over with references to Anglo-Canada such as the foregoing pages have supplied?

In reply one may begin by observing that today the vast majority of



these immigrants have in fact become identified with English Canada. Though some of them still maintain a degree of exclusiveness, especially among the older generation (the Ukrainians, Mennonites, and Icelanders are cases in point), their general orientation is usually close to that of the English Canadians whose language they have adopted, and nowhere is this more evident than in their politics. For sheer intolerance of French ambitions there is little to choose between an Orangeman from Southern Ontario and a Mennonite from the Prairies. The common cause of Protestantism has made curious alliances in the past, and it continues to make them in Canada today. If "Anglo-Canada" is accepted as a political concept, rather than a racial one, I feel the view of it that has been offered will not be found to stray too far from the truth.

There are all these sub-minorities within it, nevertheless, and the question remains as to just how to treat them. And here an incoherence seems to loom into view, with two contradictory principles clashing together. If on the one hand we have accepted the mosaic as the basic pattern for our society, as we daily profess to have done, then it would appear that all our sub-minorities are entitled to the same encouragements as we give to the much larger minority of the French. You cannot have a mosaic without variety, and how else is variety to be preserved? If on the other hand the whole idea of a mosaic is a delusion, and flatly at odds with our original concept of a dual nation, the answer appears to be equally plain. New immigrants cannot expect to keep themselves apart in sub-enclaves within the nation, but must be prepared to integrate with one or other of the two main groups. Dualism is not plurality, and how else is dualism to be preserved?

Some Canadians today—hypnotised perhaps by the frequency with which

the mosaic principle is invoked—appear to believe that there is little to choose between it and the principle of dualism: both are valid, and both ought to be allowed to flourish. For several reasons this position must be considered untenable. In the first place, we cannot have our cake and eat it, and when two objectives are as incompatible as these a choice becomes unavoidable. In the second place, the concept of a mosaic is far more recent than the principle of dualism and its claim to enforcement is much less persuasive. One has the impression that it was arrived at in retrospect only, as a rather smug means of dissociating ourselves from the American idea of a melting pot and of flattering the non-French minorities who had already made their homes here. In the third place, there is some ambiguity in the whole notion of a mosaic. The word can cover a social pattern where compulsory integration is frowned on, and where the integrative process is allowed to proceed at its natural speed; or it can mean that integration is to be positively resisted, so that each ethnic pocket is sealed off from its environs and encouraged to develop in Hutterite seclusion.

Only a small number of "New Canadians" espouse the extremity of this last interpretation, but to bandy the word "mosaic" about with such carelessness will not help others to avoid it altogether. Ordinarily people emigrating to a new country accept almost without thinking the obligation to conform to its distinctive laws and customs; but if after arrival they are repeatedly told the obligation no longer exists they are bound to hesitate, wondering just how much of their old lives need to be sacrificed, after all. This is roughly what has been happening in Canada, and surely it is high time to call a halt to it. All the evidence goes to prove that we were, and still are, a dual nation, English and French, and if there is

to be any continuity in our heritage this dualism must at all costs be preserved. What else is the present anxiety over the Quiet Revolution in Quebec all about? If we are to go glibly on, chattering about our cultural mosaic, the result will cease to be (what it already is) a politician's nightmare, and will become a nightmare of incomprehensibility to every one of us, Old and New Canadians alike.

Will a clear recognition of the principle of dualism work a hardship on the non-French and non-English emigrants who have settled here, or who come to settle here in future years? The question seems to me to beg several others—notably that of their original decision to emigrate—but even if it is accepted at face value the answer can hardly be an unqualified "Yes". Does an Italian-American or a German-American feel that he has been robbed of his cultural birthright? Surely what he feels is that he has been initiated into a different one, one that is more appropriate to his new environment, one that is at least as rewarding as that which he has lost. The older generation of immigrants naturally tends to be nostalgic about "the old country", often forgetting why they left it, but it is rank sentimentalism to try to entail nostalgia of this kind on generations to come. What we ought to remember is that it is commonly the older folk who speak for their communities in these matters; and that the case they make, were it to be put from the point of view of their descendants, would be much less reactionary. As a nation it therefore behoves us to have those descendants very clearly in mind. If they are born in this country then Canadianism is theirs by right of birth, and they should be just as free to benefit from it as the descendants of United Empire Loyalists or Acadians. On the face of it, then, the only sub-minorities who seem to be entitled to special protection are our Indians and Eskimos, on the grounds

that they inhabited Canada long before any of the rest of us thought of doing it. By far the most dignified and moving remark reproduced in the Royal Commission's Preliminary Report is that of the Indian chief who was asked whether he thought the demands of French Canadians for the preservation of their language should be met. "Certainly," he replied. "If another group can succeed in doing something when we have been condemned to death, we will be glad for them." Such fortitude deserves every kind of assistance; such magnanimity is an object lesson to us all.

BILINGUALISM

Would the abandonment of our mosaic confusion mean that all Canadians had to give up their original languages, where those were different, and buckle down to learning both English and French? Put like that the question is sharpened into a challenge, as though bilingualism had to be achieved forthwith, and perhaps it is advisable to come at it less crudely, by again considering the example of South Africa.

Since the nineteen twenties, at least, all public schools in South Africa have been teaching both languages to their pupils from the earliest grades. Even forty years ago the practice was for this instruction to be given in the appropriate language as soon as familiarity permitted it, and today bilingualism has gone much further, so that some subjects are now taught in Afrikaans and others in English on a basis of complete equality. Thus an English-speaking child may learn Science and Latin in English, but Geography and History will then be taught to him through the medium of Afrikaans. Obviously by the end of his schooling his knowledge of both official languages is thus likely to be pretty extensive, permitting him to express himself in one or the other with almost equal facility. Indeed many young South Africans are now so thoroughly bilingual that they pass

the ultimate test, thinking and even dreaming in either language as pure accident determines.

Many of us may feel that this is a consummation devoutly to be wished in Canada, and certainly of its political advantages there can be little doubt. But bilingualism is always more feasible in a country like South Africa, where the two language groups are territorially indistinct, and may be less so in Canada, where a certain isolation still exists. There are some grounds for suspecting, moreover, that complete bilingualism often involves an appreciable sacrifice of true inwardness with one language or the other, and that what is gained on the political level may entail a serious loss on the level of culture and literature. For every Joseph Conrad, so to speak, there is a whole generation of Belgians and Swiss with little to show in the way of literary achievement, little to pride themselves on in the way of cultural success.

I make the point in order to suggest that some qualification might be advisable in any ideal of bilingualism which, as a nation, we were tempted to pursue. Clearly if dualism is to be worth much there should be reciprocity between the dual partners, and the token instruction in a second language in many of our schools ought to be conscientiously improved as soon as competent teachers have been found to implement the improvement. So too all branches and agencies of the federal administration or the judiciary should be fully bilingual: as Chief Justice Dorion has said, it is disquieting to realize that English police officers have been briefed to investigate cases in which the principal suspects have all been French. But there are dangers of a different sort in making thoroughgoing bilingualism an end in itself, as seems to have been done in South Africa, and we ought also to be on our guard against pushing these reforms too far. There is no sense in

raising a generation of rural Québécois to be fluent in English, or of British Columbians to be fluent in French, if in adulthood their opportunities to speak the language are to be minimal. The real aim should be to preserve English for the English, and French for the French, and to encourage—but not force—as free a dialogue in both languages as the circumstances will permit.

Qualified or limited in such a way, bilingualism is much less likely to irritate the sub-minorities who have settled here. Instead it will mesh in with, and help to confirm, the only interpretation of "mosaic" with any claim to acceptance: that given above as "a social pattern where compulsory integration is frowned on, and where the integrative process is allowed to proceed at its natural speed". We Canadians are fond of jeering at the semi-mythical figure of the American immigrant declaring in broken English, on the ship's gangplank, that he is now an American. Derision causes us to overlook two things which might otherwise be plain: first, that this is a most desirable attitude for any new arrival in a country to adopt; secondly, that in order to modify the artificiality of the declaration it is hardly necessary to postpone integration till doomsday. We think far too much of the here and now, forgetting that within two or three generations all kinds of changes will have taken place. A German of thirty, landing in Canada, will naturally retain an affection for the land and language of his childhood, but (if he hasn't already done so) will also apply himself to mastering English or French, depending on the province where he chooses to settle. His son may well inherit his affection for Germany but his fluency in German, the opportunities to speak it being so much more limited, will almost certainly be less. By the next generation of sons and daughters, growing up in an environment predominantly English or French, a knowledge of German will be something of an intellectual

luxury, and if their grandfather insists on their acquiring it they will probably regard the old man as a crank. This is the natural process, and to try to arrest it on the grounds that a cultural sacrifice of huge proportions is occurring seems absurd. Where have there been more vigorous cultures than in the melting pots of early England, or present-day America? The contributions of minorities to the total heritage of their adopted lands are not to be measured by their proficiency in foreign languages sixty years hence.

ANGLO-CANADA'S MIRROR

I have been trying to outline—all too brusquely—two or three specific correctives for the disunity which afflicts us today. Perhaps before concluding I may revert to more general counsels. They will be addressed first to English Canadians, and then to the French.

Some years back Hugh MacLennan was interviewed on a television programme and, being asked what seemed to him the chief ingredient in the Canadian national character, replied that it was "a vast inner loneliness". The answer was kindly, for the question might well have provoked a much blunter one. As a nation we are excessively given to such questions—to "contemplating the national navel", as Professor Wade tartly puts it—and it seems to have escaped our notice how often the answers we supply to them amount only to self-dramatizing lies. In some ways this might be called the root-problem behind English Canada's response to the bicultural issue, this unreadiness to take a hard and candid look at ourselves. Glancing into his mirror, what does the average Anglo-Canadian usually see? Very much what he wants to see, his "good side" as cinema actresses say: an honest, frank, dependable sort of fellow. How often does he catch even a



glimpse of the other side, the touchy chauvinist, or the dishonest businessman who has done almost nothing to help his French partner in the hope that he might one day buy him out?

No one will claim that group mirror-gazing with this degree of candour is easy. At times, for example during a war, it may not even be advisable. But if individuals can manage it from time to time in their private lives (and all of us do) it is surely to be expected that we should occasionally achieve it in public and as a group, particularly when it can do so much to instruct us about the forces pulling our society in two.

I have been suggesting that we should make the painful effort of self-scrutiny, and that if we were to do so two facts about ourselves would strike us between the eyes. The first is that we are coming to adopt a more and more envious—even petulant—attitude toward nations which still outrank us, like Great Britain and the United States, and that the poison of this jealousy is corroding our native good sense. The second is that we have been far too ready to turn our backs on the real goal of our society, the great partnership, and have in consequence found ourselves wandering in a labyrinth, unable to see in what our national identity should consist.

Therapy by self-recognition is not very fashionable today, but if we practised it better the results might astonish us all. Let a man make a truly frank assessment of himself, discarding all pretences, and many of the decisions he has to make will solve themselves. To go on acting and reacting while refusing to pass through this prior stage of introspection is to debase industry into an escape, and a useless one at that. So long as we are insincere with ourselves about our responses to Britain and America, and to Quebec, so long as the edginess which this causes still

persists, we will have only a slim chance of attaining the greatness which is offered us. The very eyes through which we seek for it will be myopic, filmed over with affectation, bias, and asperity. We need none of these things. What we do need is candour of spirit, and the humility that it brings.

Is this to appeal for the unprocurable? In the estimation of many of us over forty it may appear so, but one of the perennially heartening things about almost any nation is the brisk impatience of its younger people, and it is with these juniors that our dilemma will very soon rest. They have haircuts like swatches of sisal, and their music galls the ear, but under all the cheerful camouflage lies a degree of iconoclasm which could prove invaluable, a sharp unwillingness to accept the mistakes of the past. The danger, in a society which, as Harold Town has put it, is "savagely self-repressed", is that this open-mindedness will be suffocated too soon. Perhaps if we made the effort to confront our mirror conscientiously from time to time its chances for survival would be vastly improved.

FRANCO-CANADA'S TELEPHONE

At this date most French Canadians will be outraged if it is suggested that their demands could be more carefully explained, but it may be good for them to realize that, so far as Western Canada at least is concerned, this is still the case. The trouble with the Quiet Revolution is the usual one with any popular movement: that it hasn't been quiet enough, and has spawned a multiplicity of voices, all of them raised in dissonant chorus. From the vantage point of Calgary or Vancouver it has become increasingly difficult to distinguish between the voices of moderate French Canada on the one hand and those of the Séparatistes or the F.L.Q. on the other. In

consequence many Westerners attribute radical views to Quebec as a whole and lose patience with what, properly understood, might strike them as reasonable enough. Some Québécois may retort that this result is only to be expected, and that it is typical of Anglo-Canada to spare no effort to discredit the French position by misrepresentation; but even if that were true it would only make it all the more necessary for responsible French voices to be heard in the West. Mediation between the two races is simply not to be trusted to journalists, whose chief concern is usually with headline news, and with catering to local prejudices instead of reforming them.

Here again the younger generation could be very influential, if only the appeal to their imaginations could be arresting enough. I am thinking of French university students, all those fiery young men and women whose fire has already carried them well along the road to Separatism. Could an alternative cause be suggested to them? When one works in a university it is easy to overestimate the influence which academics wield, and in a country where only fifteen per cent of the college-age population goes to university this is hazardous. Students at university nevertheless comprise an unusually accessible segment of the young population, and one which will presently be exerting great influence in society at large. For that reason it may be instructive to point out what the Boer Nationalists did in South Africa when their views were being muffled by remoteness and prejudice in the same way that Quebec's now are. A fair number of the most gifted young Boers—bright, good at games, friendly, and naturally adaptable—were persuaded to attend the universities and colleges which had traditionally been English. On the sensible assumption that a single emissary is useless they went in threes and fours, worked themselves into the heart of the college

society around them, and from there proceeded to preach the doctrine of Boer Nationalism to all who would listen. Many English students did, at least to the extent of giving them a far more sympathetic hearing than they might otherwise have got.

Youthful crusading has its ugly side when, as in this case, the views it is promulgating are repressive and bigoted. But what is to hinder young men and women from Quebec mounting a similar crusade in the interests of enlightenment, by undermining the parochialism of the universities of Western Canada from within? The example of Europe should remind us that student movements can have strong repercussions in the body politic, and every teacher knows that students listen much more attentively to their own kind than to official spokesmen on the public platform. Today far too much of Western Canadian students' free time is taken up with self-centred issues like fee-raises and scholarships, issues to which they have turned in default of better ones. Yet under this narrowness, as the response of American students to the Civil Rights issue is there to demonstrate, must lie the abiding hunger of youth for a cause, for an idea that is big enough and worthy enough to claim their devotion. Even in English Canada we can do a lot to promote a rapprochement between the youth of Quebec and the youth of the West through official student exchanges, or unofficial swaps between households—so long as we remember that residence in a strange environment is only of value when it is a matter of months or years, not of weeks. But a steady westward flow of students from Quebec, all of them intent on correcting the prejudices of English Canada, would function as a direct telephone line between Lower Canada and the Rockies, and might do an enormous amount to enlighten the rising generation about the problems which they will soon be facing together.

A FINAL CHOICE

Some readers will find this smacking of dewy-eyed optimism, things having already gone much too far, in their view, for such counsels to be heeded, or to have any effect if they are. To have used the analogy with South Africa may seem particularly incautious, since Francophobia can easily cite the rise to power there of the Boers as a cautionary example, prefiguring what Canada's fate will be when the French population has increased to the point where it outnumbers the English. Moreover, to have recommended the integration of groups like the Ukrainians and Germans and to have exempted the French may be branded as illogical. Any bigot can reply that the French should be integrated as well, so that we can all live contentedly in a unified and unilingual country "with no more of this bickering".

Things have gone far indeed, so that the first of these objections is hard to dismiss. But I have not dismissed it. All I have done is to proceed on the assumption that we still have a chance to save ourselves from outright disaster. No one has yet been able to disprove this assumption, and in any case if we deny it we condemn ourselves to fatalistic inaction, to merely wringing our hands.

The second objection leaves me baffled, I confess. If anyone in Canada can identify the legitimate unrest of French Canada with the tormented irrationality of the Boers, looking forward to a time when a rampant French majority is oppressing and humiliating all Anglo-Canadians, there is little I can say to reassure them. Will it help to observe that such an attitude must be rooted in guilt, in the conviction that, if the rôles were reversed, their own purpose would only be to oppress and humiliate? Obviously not. Will it help even to point out that, in view

of the challenge to our very survival today, such fears are as unreal as they are petty, like worrying about senility while being mauled by a lion? Again, obviously not. The rooted fear of Negro or Catholic fecundity is a primitive terror, not a rational distrust. Reason will not shift it, so why should reason try?

The third objection is at least susceptible of being answered, however trying to the patience it may be. Should one try to confute it by pointing out that the French did not come to Canada as belated immigrants, but happened to be here first? Or by again citing the British North America Act—which, for all its shortcomings in detail, can still be construed as a founding document serving notice on futurity that here in Canada a grand experiment, a partnership between two historic cultures, had been set under way? Neither argument is likely to make much impression on a convinced bigot, but there is a further one which should also be advanced: by asking what essential difference he would find between such a Canada, unified out of all recognition, and its closest neighbour, the United States of America. What is more saddening than the narrowmindedness of demands for French integration is the ignorance they reveal of the history and character of this nation, and of the rewards which await us so long as our dual identity is preserved. No people can hope to achieve fulfilment without some goal to strive for, some noble objective to pursue. Canadians are infinitely luckier than South Africans in the bicultural goal their history has posited, and in a way it is the key to our very existence, the ultimate reason why we should struggle to survive. We are a unique conjunction of two splendid cultures, English and French. If like the base Indian we are to throw this pearl away then let us give over all our pretensions to nationhood and join the United States overnight. What will be left to

distinguish us from America, except a thin and formal tie with the Crown?

It is remarkable that those Canadians who are most bitterly critical of everything American should also be the ones who would most willingly relinquish Quebec.

This seems to me the crucial argument against them, this final choice between American annexation or an independent Canada. By all means let us become Americans, and without cantankerousness, if the choice disappears; but so long as the chance is left us to be our own kind of nation let us cling to it first. The difficulties in our way are grave enough, God knows, and I trust that nothing I have written here will seem to have underestimated them. Indeed this must be my justification for referring so often to the madhouse that is modern South Africa, to reduce their gravity a little through comparison. But Canada's potential as a dual nation is too staggering to warrant despondency, and even an adopted citizen may be permitted to hope that the generation of his children, and their children, will do much to make its shining promises come true.
